

# Facilitating student engagement with external organisations through credit-bearing placements

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## Introduction

The challenge of providing work-related learning within the confines of an undergraduate curriculum generates considerable discussion. The University of Glasgow's BSc Environmental Science and Sustainability addresses this by offering students the opportunity to undertake a 60-credit placement in lieu of a dissertation.

Engaging employers and students in this way has proved not only to enhance dialogue between the two organisations, but further benefits:

- **THE STUDENT:** through enhanced employability, real work experience, linking graduate attributes with work, employment offers, putting theory into practice, networking;
- **THE EXTERNAL ORGANISATION:** through recognition of the student's transferable skills and up-to-date knowledge, employee recruitment, opportunity to utilise the student's skills e.g. social media, academic writing, computing;
- **THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW:** through enhanced organisation engagement, voluntary/paid work offers to students, requests to have another student, field class/visit opportunities, internationalisation of the curriculum.

## Embedding a placement within the curriculum

Year	Semester 1	Semester 2
1	3 courses	3 courses
2	3 courses	3 courses
3	3 courses	Dissertation, or Placement (UK), or Placement (International)
4	3 courses plus 60 credit Honours Project	



## Organisation

Students (sometimes staff) contact possible placement providers for projects:

- Greater range of organisations contacted: International to local;
- Although possible issue of organisations ignoring student's email or request;
- Staff contacted by organisations each year about hosting a student.

Staff finalise insurance and project with organisation.



[www.clacksweb.org.uk](http://www.clacksweb.org.uk)



## Assessment

### Summative Assessment:

1. Initial Report (1500 words – 15%)
2. Work-based Journal (6000 words – 30%)
3. Dissertation (4000 words – 55%)

### Formative Assessment:

1. First week's journal entry formatively assessed.
2. Guidance given on dissertation on content for dissertation themes: Theory and Reality, Past and Present, Ethics, Future and Sustainability, Routine and Creativity.

## Benefits

- Work-related learning; employability enhancement;
- Real work experience – sometimes not what expected;
- Theory into practice; linking to graduate attributes;
- Internationalisation of curriculum;
- Enhanced engagement with employers; training opportunities;
- Team work and group work; career choice exposure;
- Support and assistance with organisation work;
- Increased scope of work in organisation;
- Social media input from student.

## Challenges

- Administration burden on staff;
- Steep learning curve for student;
- Balancing work and life during placement;
- Training the students – dependent upon abilities;
- Supervising students – taking staff time;
- Few opportunities for creativity – set routines.

